



Connection Pros

Title - Starting 2005 on the Right Foot

Allow me to start off my column by wishing a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year to all the members of the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce. I hope all of you enjoyed a nice holiday season with family and friends and that you were fortunate enough to receive all the gifts you asked for during Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and any other holiday I may be missing. While many of you wish that the quiet and relaxing holiday season would go on forever, IT WON'T! It's time to get back to work and start tackling your New Year's resolutions.

About 100 million Americans will venture down a well-traveled path paved with bold, and sometimes hastily conceived, New Year's resolutions. It is a route covered with promises to exercise more, lose weight, stop smoking, cut down on alcohol, eat a healthier diet and make new friends. All of these are not necessarily broken promises. According to a University of Washington survey, 63 percent of the people questioned will still be following their #1 resolution after two months.

"The keys to making a successful resolution are a person's confidence that he or she can make the behavior change and the commitment to making that change," says Elizabeth Miller, a UW doctoral candidate in psychology. In addition, the study indicates that "resolutions are a process, not a one-time effort that offers people a chance to create new habits." Even if people are successful, they need to follow up on their behavior over the years, she adds.

Have you ever wondered what the ten most common New Year's resolutions are? I had the same questions, so I researched my question and here's what I came up with:

1) Spend More Time with Family & Friends

A recent poll conducted by General Nutrition Centers shows that 59% of Americans vow to appreciate loved ones and spend more time with family and friends this year.



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2) [Fit in Fitness](#)

The evidence is in for fitness. Studies show that it reduces the risk of some cancers, increases longevity, helps achieve and maintain weight loss, enhances mood, lowers blood pressure, and even improves arthritis. In short, exercise keeps you healthy and makes you look and feel better.

3) [Tame the Bulge](#)

Fifty-five percent of adults in America are overweight, so it is not surprising to find that weight loss is one of the most popular New Year's resolutions. Setting reasonable goals and staying focused are the two most important factors in sticking with your New Year's commitment to shed extra pounds.

4) [Quit Smoking](#)

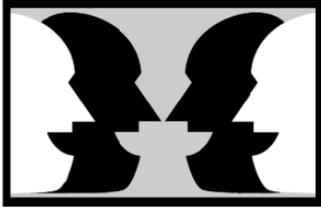
If you have resolved to make this the year that you stamp out your smoking habit, over-the-counter availability of nicotine replacement therapy now provides easier access to proven quit-smoking aids. Even if you've tried to quit before and failed, don't let it get you down. On average, smokers try about four times before they quit for good. Start enjoying the rest of your smoke-free life!

5) [Enjoy Life More](#)

The changed mood of the country following September 11 has brought about a shift in Americans' resolutions for the New Year. Millions of Americans have vowed to make this the year to not only diet and exercise but to also appreciate life itself.

6) [Quit Drinking](#)

While many people use the New Year as an incentive to finally stop drinking, most are not equipped to make such a drastic lifestyle change all at once. Many heavy drinkers fail to quit cold turkey but do much better when they taper gradually, or even learn to moderate their drinking.



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7) [Get Out of Debt](#)

Was money a big source of stress in your life last year? Join the millions of Americans who have resolved to spend this year getting a handle on their finances. It's a promise that will repay itself many times over in the year ahead.

8) [Learn Something New](#)

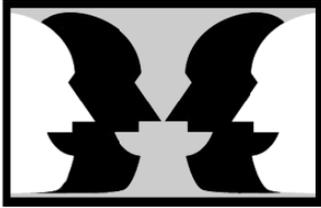
Have you vowed to make this year the year to learn something new? Perhaps you are considering a career change, want to learn a new language, or just how to fix your computer. Whether you take a course or read a book, you'll find education to be one of the easiest, most motivating New Year's resolutions to keep.

9) [Help Others](#)

A popular, non-selfish New Year's resolution, volunteerism can take many forms. Whether you choose to spend time helping out at your local library, mentoring a child, or building a house, these nonprofit volunteer organizations could really use your help.

10) [Get Organized](#)

On just about every New Year's resolution top ten list, organization can be a very reasonable goal. Whether you want your home organized enough that you can invite someone over on a whim, or your office organized enough that you can find the stapler when you need it, a more organized life means a less stressful life. (Thank you [Kimberly & Albrecht Powell](#) for this valuable information)



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Whether your resolutions made the list or not, always understand that your resolutions can be successful if you put in the time and effort necessary to make the change. Tackle each resolution one at a time and 2005 might be your best year yet!! See you next month.